

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 177436

14

ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

SS-15 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /147 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UN/BAPS:KHBAILEY:AL

EXT. 21547 9/5/73

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R 062202Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AORG, UN, CH

SUBJECT: CHINESE AS A WORKING LANGUAGE IN THE UN

REF.: USUN 3057

1. ALTHOUGH WE ARE GENERALLY OPPOSED TO MEASURES THAT WOULD RAISE THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WE SEE LITTLE BENEFIT AND CONSIDERABLE DISADVANTAGE TO ENGAGING IN FUTILE OPPOSITION TO PRC EFFORT TO MAKE CHINESE A WORKING LANGUAGE. ACCORDINGLY, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO TELL THE PRC THAT THE UNITED STATES

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PAGE 02 STATE 177436

WILL SUPPORT RES. TO MAKE CHINESE A WORKING LANGUAGE.

YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT CHINESE IS THE ONLY CHARTER LANGUAGE (ARTICLE 111) THAT DOES NOT HAVE WORKING LANGUAGE STATUS, AND THAT WE WOULD NOT WISH DISCRIMINATE AGAINST IT. BECAUSE OF HIGH COST OF ADDING ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES YOU MAY SOLICIT PRC SUPPORT TO LIMIT WORKING LANGUAGES TO THOSE MENTIONED IN ARTICLE 111, PROVIDED YOU DO NOT DETRACT FROM POSTURE OF FREELY SUPPORTING CHINESE REQUEST. WE WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME CHINESE ASSISTANCE IN DISCOURAGING A PROLIFERATION OF NON-CHARTER LANGUAGES IN THE UNITED NATIONS WHICH WOULD ADD TO COSTS IN A GEOMETRIC PROGRESSION.

2. BACKGROUND: WE NOTE THAT UNDER THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT WITH CHINESE AS ONLY AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, SPEECHES ARE NOT ALWAYS INTERPRETED EXCEPT ON REQUEST, VERBATIM RECORDS ARE TRANSLATED ONLY ON REQUEST AND THE JOURNAL IS NOT PUBLISHED IN TRANSLATION. THERE HAVE BEEN CASES, SUCH AS LAST SEPTEMBER'S MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE PANEL ON PUBLIC INFORMATION, IN WHICH THE PRC REQUESTED INTERPRETERS AND THEN DID NOT ATTEND AND USE THE SERVICE REQUESTED. HOWEVER, WE WELCOME PRC ASSURANCES THAT A REASONABLE EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO KEEP THE COSTS DOWN. IN THIS RESPECT, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN THE PRC ASSESSMENT IN 1974 WILL PROBABLY BE GREATER THAN THE ESTIMATED COST OF MAKING CHINESE A WORKING LANGUAGE. THE PRC ASSESSMENT RATE WILL CHANGE FROM 4.00 TO 5.50 PERCENT. FOR 1973 THE PRC NET ASSESSMENT IS DOLS. 7.5 MILLION AND A 5.50 RATE WOULD HAVE MADE IT DOLS. 10.3 MILLION, AN INCREASE ABOVE THE DOLS. 2.1 MILLION ESTIMATE MENTIONED IN REFTEL FOR INCREASED LANGUAGE COSTS.

3. IN CONNECTION WITH OUR DESIRE TO QUOTE CLOSE THE DOOR UNQUOTE ON ANY ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES BEYOND THOSE MENTIONED IN ARTICLE 111, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE THE MISSION'S VIEWS ON THE IDEA OF REQUESTING A UN STUDY OF A PAY-AS-YOU-GO SYSTEM WHEREBY ALL DELEGATIONS WOULD BE ASSESSED FOR THE COSTS OF THE LANGUAGE SERVICES THEY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 177436

CHOOSE TO UTILIZE, INCLUDING ENGLISH, AND THAT ANY LANGUAGE NOT MENTIONED IN ARTICLE 111 COULD ALSO BE USED. THIS METHOD WOULD ALLOW MEMBERS THE PRESTIGE OF USING THEIR NATIONAL LANGUAGE IF THEY PAY THE BILL FOR IT AND WOULD ALSO ALLOW SOME SAVINGS TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO SHARE THE COSTS OF THE MORE WIDELY USED LANGUAGES. RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE177436
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KHBAILEY:AL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730950/aaaabkye.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: : USUN 3057
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jul-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHINESE AS A WORKING LANGUAGE IN THE UN
TAGS: PFOR, AORG, CH, UN
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005